



# PROSSER AREA GROCERY PREFERENCES: A SURVEY

Prepared: August 2016

A part of economic excellence in a community is its access to services that enhance the daily lives of its citizens and businesses. These include basics such as housing, schools, health care, and food/grocery options. Given that institutions such as schools and hospitals are managed by other community administrative entities, the Prosser Economic Development Association (Prosser EDA) has an opportunity to improve the lives of its citizens through a focused effort on addressing needs and concerns relating to housing and food.

The Prosser EDA Special Project's Committee, charged with addressing specific, longer-term community issues as they arise, initiated a subcommittee charged with determining whether or not the needs of the citizens were being met with current available options. This subcommittee determined that the most appropriate starting point was to quantitatively learn Prosser Area citizens'

grocery shopping habits and preferences. This particular task was both a reactive response to community discussions on current available grocery options, and a proactive response to help formulate direction and guidelines for current or would-be grocery venues for our economically-growing city.

The Committee is comprised of both Prosser EDA, City of Prosser, and Residents-at-Large members, representing Education, Tourism, Food Processing, City Administration, and general citizen needs. A complete list of committee members and their affiliations is found at the end of this report.

After several meetings and discussions, the committee agreed that many of the statements made "on behalf of" Prosser citizens regarding grocery preferences were not backed by any surveys or statistics. To remedy this, and gather the relevant information to determine whether or not the existence of a project targeting grocery stores in Prosser was relevant, the committee designed a community-wide survey to gather necessary information.

This survey was administered between 24 May and 17 June 2016. It was circulated through Prosser EDA board member contacts, posted on the Prosser EDA website (<http://www.prosser.org/>), and circulated through the Prosser EDA Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Prosser-Economic-Development-Association-450372390646/>). The survey was administered through a commercial survey tool (SurveyMonkey.com). There were 251 survey responses; which is approximately 5% of the households in the area. The committee viewed this response rate favorably, given the number of potential grocery shoppers in the household who also happen to have regular internet access.

## WHERE DO YOU LIVE AND WORK?

To gain a sense of how home and work locations may impact shopping habits, we asked respon-

## PROSSER DEMOGRAPHICS (ZIP CODE 99350)

**Total Population:** 14,387. Population over 19 yrs old: 9,858.

**Population Age:** 49% of the population is between 25 and 64 yrs old – prime shopping age for heads of households.

**Total Households:** 4,947

**Median Income:** \$57,882. This is only slightly lower than the Benton County median income of \$59,974. In Prosser, 45% of the households make between \$50,000 and \$74,999; this is higher than the Benton County average of 18%. In Prosser, 30% of households make more than \$75,000.

**Education:** 74% of people over the age of 25 have a High School diploma or higher, 18% have a Bachelor's Degree or higher. Of all people 25 or older, 6% have a Graduate or Professional degree.

*All demographic data is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau, based on the 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.*

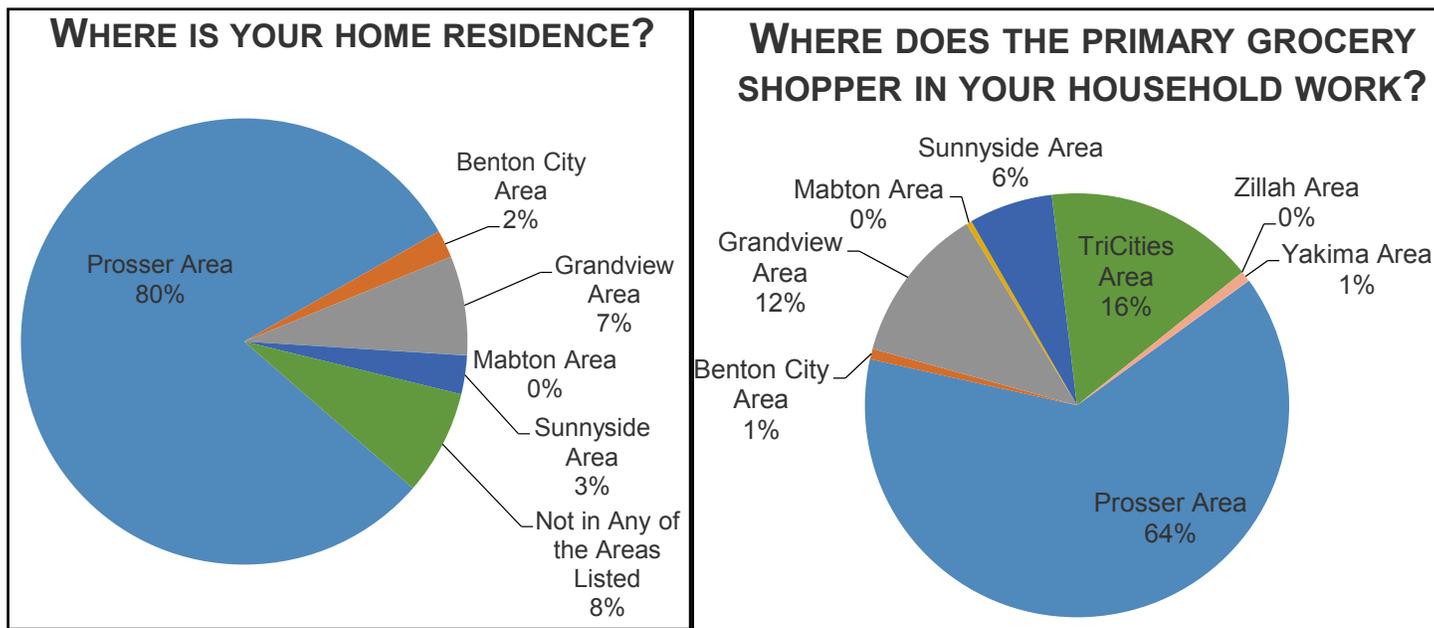


Figure 1 - Self-identified residence and work locations of survey respondents.

dents to indicate where they live, and where the primary grocery shopper in the household works. In both instances, the majority of the respondents selected the Prosser Area. Specifically, 80% of the respondents live in Prosser, and 64% work in Prosser. Residence and work locations are presented in **Fig. 1**. When responses were filtered to only include Prosser residents, 70% of those respondents indicated they worked in Prosser.

### WHAT DO YOU SPEND EACH WEEK?

The majority of respondents (69%) spend over \$101 a week on groceries (**Table 1**). This would equate to over \$400 a month, or \$4,800 a year. Given the median income of Benton County (\$59,974), respondents are spending approximately 8% of their income on groceries. The national average of disposable income spent on food was 5.5% in 2014. *Survey respondents in the Prosser area are spending more of their income on food than the average American household.*

When filtered to only include responses of Prosser residents, the results shifted to slightly more people spending \$1-\$50 (7%), \$151-\$200 (23%), and over \$300 (3.5%). In Prosser, 68% spend more than \$101 a week on groceries, equating to approximately 8.3% of their disposable income (based on Prosser median income of \$57,882).

### WHERE DO YOU GROCERY SHOP?

When asked where they have shopped for gro-

**Table 1.** How much do you spend on grocery-related items each week?

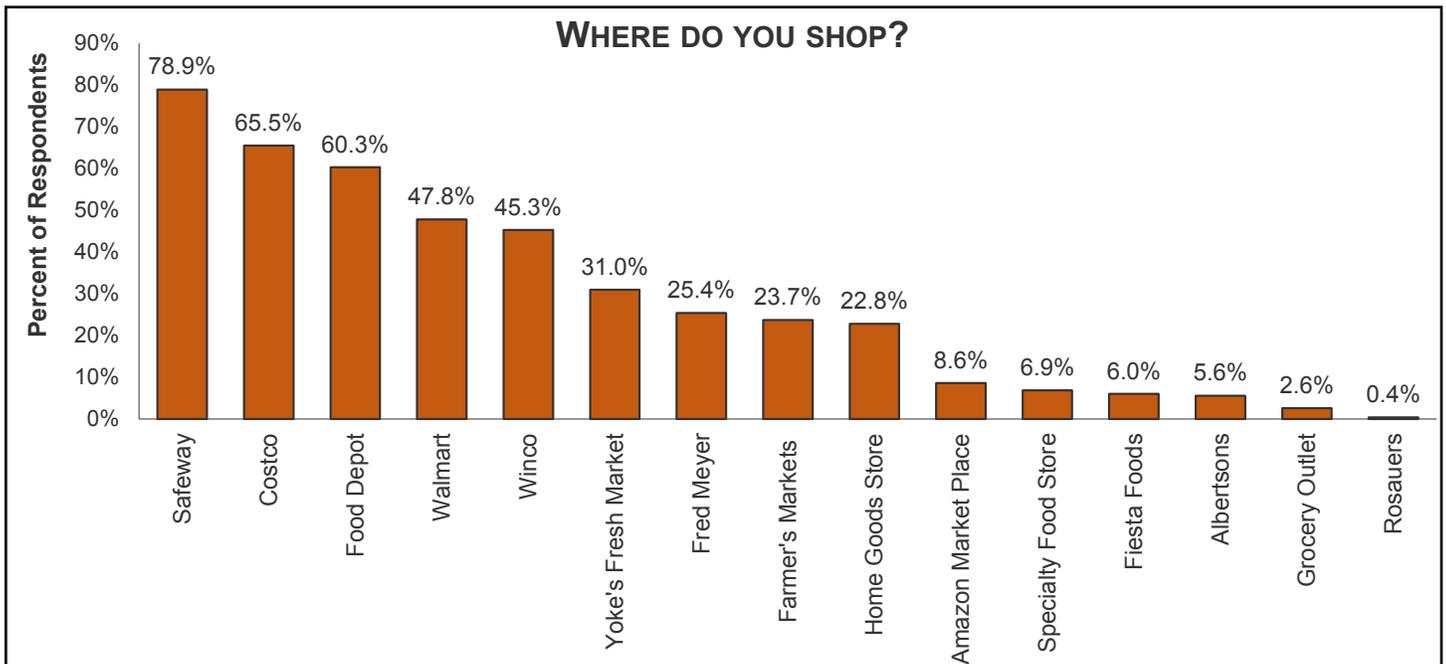
Price Range	Percent of Respondents
\$1-\$50	6.0%
\$51-\$100	25.2%
\$101-\$150	32.8%
\$151-\$200	21.2%
\$201-\$250	8.0%
\$251-\$300	3.6%
Over \$300	3.2%

cery-related items in the last 30 days, respondents indicated that they shop at a variety of locations.

The top-ranking stores (greater than 25%) were: Safeway (79%), Costco (66%), Food Depot (60%), Walmart (48%), Winco (45%), Yoke's (31%), and Fred Meyer (25%) (**Fig. 2**).

For reference, Food Depot is located in Prosser City limits. The nearest Safeway is 6.8 miles away in Grandview, WA. The nearest Walmart with groceries is 12.8 miles away in Sunnyside, WA. The next nearest stores are in Richland; Winco is 24.4 miles away, Yoke's is 20.7 miles away and Fred Meyer is 23.4 miles away. Costco is located 25.6 miles away in Kennewick, WA.

When filtered to only include Prosser residents, fewer people shopped at Safeway (78%), and more shopped at Costco (68%), Walmart (48%), Winco (47%) and Food Depot (64%). Interestingly, responses related to Food Depot shopping were



**Figure 2** - Grocery store preferences of respondents in the last 30 days.

mostly associated with “emergency” or “occasional” shopping.

When you compare store preferences to how much people spend, the big spenders (spending over \$300 per week), shop at Safeway (63%), Costco (63%), Yoke’s (38%), Winco (38%) and Walmart (38%), with other options falling below 25%.

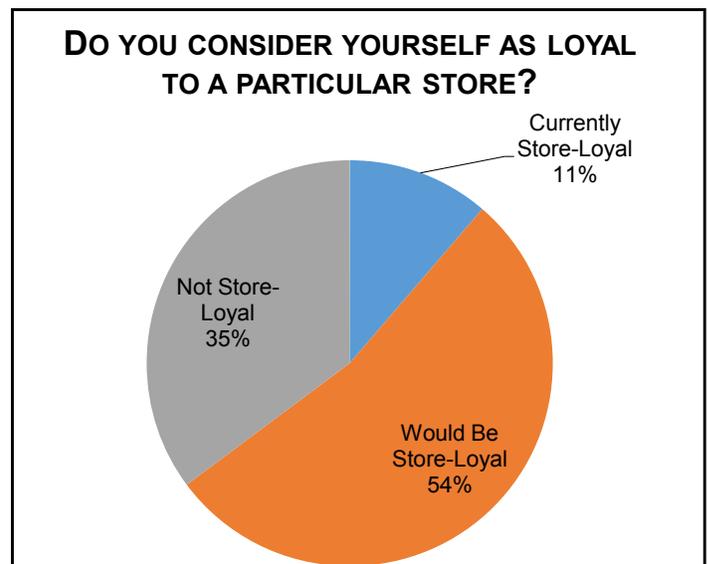
This is in contrast to the low spenders (spending less than \$100 per week), who primarily shop at Safeway (72%), Food Depot (70%), Costco (55%), Walmart (49%), and Winco (48%). Interestingly, these same low spenders who more frequently shopped at Food Depot indicated it was too expensive (47%), or had overall negative comments about their Food Depot experiences (79%) (n=38).

## STORE LOYALTY

When operating any business that provides basic necessities to residents, a major question is: Will residents be loyal to my local business, or will I lose to internet or out-of-town competition? We asked survey respondents if they considered themselves store loyal. Their responses indicated that the majority either consider themselves as currently store-loyal, or they would be loyal if there was a store that met their needs (**Fig. 3**).

## FACTORS INFLUENCE STORE CHOICE

Interestingly, proximity to home or work were the

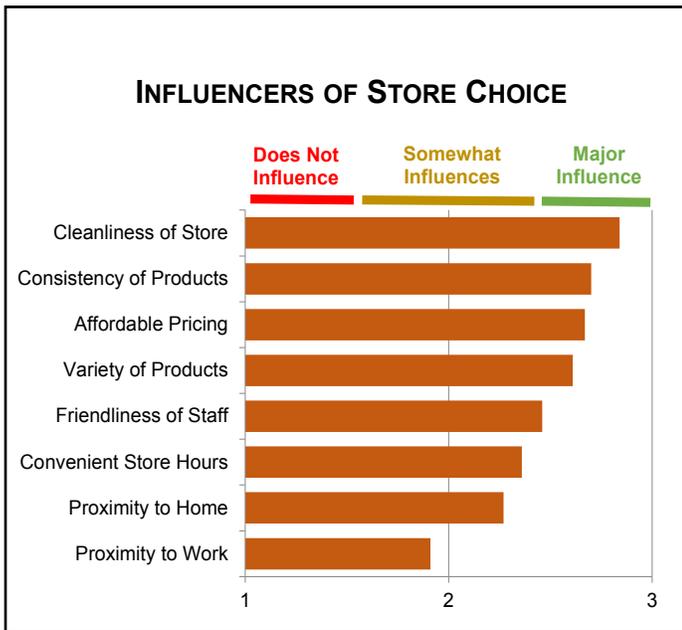


**Figure 3** - Respondents view themselves a likely to be store loyal, if the store met their needs.

lowest-ranking factors influencing where respondents shop (**Fig. 4; next page**). The top three factors were cleanliness of the store, consistency of products and affordable pricing.

## DESIRED ITEMS / PRODUCTS IN A STORE

Convenience foods (pre-packaged snacks, soda), deli with ready-made foods, and home goods were only somewhat important in respondents’ desired grocery store. The most important items were dairy, local produce, and frozen foods (**Fig. 5; next page**).



**Figure 4** - Aspects that influence where respondents shop.



**Figure 5** - The rank of importance of different grocery categories by respondents.

## COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

- While many citizens indicate that they do shop at the local grocery store (Food Depot), several emphasized they only do so when they need a small number of items, or that they only purchase goods that do not expire. There were very concerning comments (backed by a recent health inspection) regarding the confidence residents have of the food safety of the store.
- Prosser residents spend more than 8% of their income on food—much of this money is being spent outside of the community.
- The majority of residents indicated they would be store loyal, if the store met basic requirements of cleanliness, quality, and affordability.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members of the Prosser EDA Special Projects Grocery Subcommittee represent Prosser EDA Board Members, Prosser City Administrators, and Citizens-at-Large. Participation is on a volunteer basis.

Members include: Joshua Mott (Board Vice President, Hospitality) and Tyson Jones (Board Member, Food Processing) Co-Chairs, Dr. Michelle Moyer (Board Member, Higher Education), Dr. Brian Sollers (Board Member, Healthcare), Catherine Jones (Citizen), Dave Stockdale (City of Prosser), Deb Heintz (Prosser EDA

Executive Director), Jane Hagarty (Board Member), Julie Peterson (Board President), Keith Sattler (Board Member), Randy Taylor (Mayor, City of Prosser), and Troy Berglund (Board Member, Utilities).

## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Tri-City Herald. 19 July 2016. Tri-City Restaurant Inspections Through July 8. [Online]. <http://www.tri-cityherald.com/news/local/article90662432.html>. Accessed: 27 July 2016.

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